July-August, 2002 and had discussions on Indo-French co-operation in the political, economic, military, scientific and cultural fields and reviewed the strategic dialogue initiated between the two countries in 1998 to chalk out a way forward;

(b) if so, whether any agreements have been signed between the two countries;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) to what extent these agreements would give boost to the Indo-French ties?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin visited India on 2nd-3rd August 2002. During his meetings with EAM a wide range of issues were discussed including an in depth review of bilateral political, economic, scientific and cultural cooperation as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern. The on-going strategic dialogue between the two countries was also reviewed.

(b) to (d) No agreement was signed during the visit.

Amendments in the Trade Union Act, 1926

*255. SHRI C. P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring amendments in the existing Trade Union Act, 1926, keeping in view recommendations of the Second Labour Commission;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received any representations/ suggestions from the industry in this regard, if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the industry has suggested distinction between the Trade Union and registered Trade Union, if so, the suggested eligibility criteria; and

(e) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (e) The Trade Unions Act, 1926 was recently amended and the amended provisions have come into force w.e.f. 09.01.2002. The thrust of the amendments is aimed at reducing multiplicity of trade unions, promoting internal democracy, rank and file leadership of the trade unions and facilitating their orderly growth and regulation.

All India Manufacturers Organisation (AIMO) have represented to the Government that outside office bearers should be excluded from the unions' membership. Another representation was also received from Karnataka Employers Association, Greater Mysore Chamber of Industry, Employers Federation of Southern India (K). They have suggested that availability of legal aid to workers and trade unions from public funds to facilitate them to hire legal counsels could lead to encouraging growth of litigation.

Ministry of Labour have not received any suggestions from any industry Associations to make a distinction between trade union and registered trade union.

Legislation on conditions at work places

*256. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Second Labour Commission in its report submitted to Government, recommended steps to check multiplicity of trade unions, reduction in holidays and empowering employers to lay-off and retrench without prior permission;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Commission has suggested for a legislation on conditions at work places and another for unorganized sectors, besides advising Government to notify a national floor level minimum wage, giving State Governments powers to fix minimum wage which should be below the national level; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what action has been taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The National Commission on Labour in its report submitted to Government on 29.06.2002 has made a wide ranging recommendations on various aspects of labour *viz.* review of laws, social security, women &